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NEWS: Opinion

Pipeline bill poses problems



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The Michigan Senate believes that private utilities know better than local government when it comes to protecting the citizenry from pipeline leaks and disasters.

The Senate must also feel that corporations ought to be in charge of local planning and zoning.

The state Senate recently approved legislation that would allow pipelines and utility lines to be built near highways without the consent of local governments, opening the door for a stalled gasoline pipeline in the Lansing area.

The Senate voted 29-9 to send the bill to the House, despite

objections from some lawmakers who said local communities would



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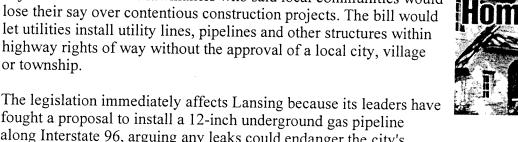
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The legislation immediately affects Lansing because its leaders have fought a proposal to install a 12-inch underground gas pipeline along Interstate 96, arguing any leaks could endanger the city's water supply and residents' safety. But the bill also has long-term implications for utilities and local governments across Michigan.

We find this legislation simply pandering to utility special interests -

highway rights of way without the approval of a local city, village



6/21/2005

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